

SALMAGUNDI;
OR, THE
WHIM-WHAMS AND OPINIONS
OF
LAUNCELOT LANGSTAFF, ESQ.
AND OTHERS.

In hoc est hoax, cum quiz et jokesez,
Et smokein, toastem, roastem folksez,
Fee, faw, fum. *Psalmazar.*

With baked, and broiled, and stewed, and toasted,
And fried, and boiled, and smoked, and roasted,
We treat the town.

NO. XIII. *Friday. August 14, 1807.* NO. 3 OF VOL. 2.

FROM MY ELBOW-CHAIR.

I was not a little perplexed, a short time since, by the eccentric conduct of my knowing coadjutor, Will Wizard. For two or three days, he was completely in a quandary. He would come into old Cockloft's parlour ten times a day, swinging his ponderous legs along with his usual vast strides, clap his hands into his sides, contemplate the little shepherdesses on the mantle-piece for a few minutes, whistling all the while, and then sally out full sweep, without uttering a word. To be sure a *fish*, or a *fishaw* occasionally escaped him; and he was observed once to pull out his enormous tobacco box, drum for a moment upon its lid with his knuckles, and then return it into his pocket without taking a quid—'twas evident Will was full of some mighty idea—not that his restlessness was any way uncommon; for I have often seen Will throw himself almost into a fever of heat and

fatigue—doing nothing. But his inflexible taciturnity set the whole family, as usual, a wondering, as Will seldom enters the house without giving one of his “one thousand and one” stories. For my part, I began to think that the late *fracas* at Canton had alarmed Will for the safety of his friends Kinglun, Chinqua and Consequa; or, that something had gone wrong in the alterations of the theatre—or that some new outrage at Norfolk had put him in a worry—in short, I did not know what to think; for Will is such an universal busy-body, and meddles so much in every thing going forward, that you might as well attempt to conjecture what is going on in the north star, as in his precious pericranium. Even Mrs. Cockloft who (like a worthy woman as she is) seldom troubles herself about any thing in this world—saving the affairs of her household, and the correct deportment of her female friends—was struck with the mystery of Will’s behaviour. She happened, when he came in and went out the tenth time, to be busy darning the bottom of one of the old red damask chairs, and notwithstanding this is to her an affair of vast importance, yet, she could not help turning round and exclaiming “I wonder what can be the matter with Mr. Wizard?”——“Nothing” replied old Christopher, “only we shall have an eruption soon.” The old lady did not understand a word of this—neither did she care—she had expressed her wonder; and that, with her, is always sufficient.

I am so well acquainted with Will’s peculiarities, that I can tell, even by his whistle, when he is about an essay for our paper, as certainly as a weather wiseacre knows that it is going to rain, when he sees a pig run squeaking about with his nose in the

wind. I therefore, laid my account with receiving a communication from him before long, and sure enough, the evening before last I distinguished his free-mason knock at my door. I have seen many wise men in my time, philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, politicians, editors, and almanack makers, but never did I see a man look half as wise as did my friend Wizard on entering the room. Had Lavater beheld him at that moment, he would have set him down to a certainty, as a fellow who had just discovered the longitude, or the philosopher's stone.

Without saying a word, he handed me a roll of paper, after which he lighted his cygarr, sat down, crossed his legs, folded his arms, and elevating his nose to an angle of about forty-five degrees, began to smoke like a steam-engine—Will delights in the picturesque. On opening his budget, and perceiving the motto, it struck me that Will had brought me one of his confounded chinese manuscripts, and I was forthwith going to dismiss it with indignation, but accidentally seeing the name of our oracle, the sage Linkum, (of whose inestimable folioes we pride ourselves upon being the sole possessors,) I began to think the better of it and looked round at Will to express my approbation. I shall never forget the figure he cut at that moment! He had watched my countenance, on opening his manuscript, with the argus eyes of an author, and perceiving some tokens of disapprobation, began, according to custom, to puff away at his cygarr with such vigour, that in a few minutes he had entirely involved himself in smoke, except his nose and one foot which were just visible, the latter wagging with great velocity. I believe I

have hinted before—at least I ought to have done so—that Will's nose is a very goodly nose; to which it may be as well to add, that in his voyages under the tropics, it has acquired a copper complexion, which renders it very brilliant and luminous. You may imagine what a sumptuous appearance it made, projecting boldly, like the celebrated *promontorium nasidium* at Samos, with a light-house upon it, and surrounded on all sides with smoke and vapour. Had my gravity been like the chinese philosopher's "within one degree of absolute frigidity," here would have been a trial for it.---I could not stand it, but burst into such a laugh, as I do not indulge in above once in a hundred years---this was too much for Will---he emerged from his cloud, threw his cygarr into the fire-place, and strode out of the room pulling up his breeches, muttering something which, I verily believe, was nothing more nor less than a horrible long chinese malediction.

He however left his manuscript behind him, which I now give to the world. Whether he is serious on the occasion, or only bantering, no one I believe can tell; for whether in speaking or writing, there is such an invincible gravity in his demeanour and style that even I, who have studied him as closely as an antiquarian studies an old manuscript or inscription, am frequently at a loss to know what the rogue would be at. I have seen him indulge in his favourite amusement of *quizzing* for hours together, without any one having the least suspicion of the matter, until he would suddenly twist his phiz into an expression that baffles all description, thrust his tongue in his cheek and *blow up* in a laugh almost as loud as the shout of

the romans on a certain occasion, which honest Plutarch avers frightened several crows to such a degree that they fell down stone dead into the Campus Martius. Jeremy Cockloft the younger, who, like a true modern philosopher, delights in experiments that are of no kind of use, took the trouble to measure one of Will's risible explosions, and declared to me that, according to accurate measurement, it contained thirty feet square of solid laughter——what will the professors say to this?

PLANS FOR DEFENDING OUR HARBOUR.

BY WILLIAM WIZARD, ESQ.

Long-fong te-ko buzz tor-fie-do,

Fudge——

CONFUCIUS.

We'll blow the villains all sky high ;

But do it with econo——my.

LINK. FID.

Surely never was a town more subject to mid-summer fancies and dog-day whim-whams, than this most excellent of cities :—Our notions, like our diseases, seem all epidemick ; and no sooner does a new disorder or a new freak seize one individual but it is sure to run through all the community. This is particularly the case when the summer is at the hottest, and every body's head is in a vertigo, and his brain in a ferment---'tis absolutely necessary then the poor souls should have some bubble to amuse themselves with, or they would certainly run mad. Last year the *popular worm* made its appearance most fortunately for our citizens, and

every body was so much in horror of being poisoned and devoured, and so busied in making humane experiments on cats and dogs, that we got through the summer quite comfortably—the cats had the worst of it—every mouser of them was shaved, and there was not a whisker to be seen in the whole sisterhood. This summer every body has had full employment in planning fortifications for our harbour. Not a cobbler or tailor in the city but has left his awl and his thimble, become an engineer outright, and aspired most magnanimously to the building of forts and destruction of navies! Heavens! as my friend Mustapha would say, on what a great scale is every thing in this country!

Among the various plans that have been offered, the most conspicuous is one devised and exhibited, as I am informed, by that notable confederacy, THE NORTH RIVER SOCIETY.

Anxious to redeem their reputation from the foul suspicions that have for a long time overclouded it, these aquatic incendiaries have come forward at the present alarming juncture, and announced a most potent discovery, which is to guarantee our port from the visits of any foreign marauders. The society have, it seems, invented a cunning machine, shrewdly y'clep'd a *Torpedo*, by which the stoutest line of battle ship, even a *santissima trinidad* may be caught napping, and *decomposed* in a twinkling—a kind of sub-marine powder magazine to swim under water, like an aquatic mole, or water rat, and destroy the enemy in the moments of unsuspecting security.

This straw tickled the noses of all our dignitaries wonderfully—for, to do our government justice, it has no objection to injuring and exterminating its

enemies in any manner—provided the thing can be done *economically*.

It was determined the experiment should be tried, and an old brig was purchased (for not more than twice its value,) and delivered over into the hands of its tormentors, the North River Society, to be tortured, and battered, and annihilated, *secundum artem*. A day was appointed for the occasion, when all the good citizens of the wonder loving city of Gotham were invited to the blowing up ; like the fat inn-keeper in Rabelais, who requested all his customers to come on a certain day and see him burst.

As I have almost as great a veneration as the good mr. Walter Shandy, for all kinds of experiments that are ingeniously ridiculous, I made very particular mention of the one in question at the table of my friend Christopher Cockloft, but it put the honest old gentleman in a violent passion. He condemned it in toto, as an attempt to introduce a dastardly, and exterminating mode of warfare. “Already have we proceeded far enough” said he, “in the science of destruction ; war is already invested with sufficient horrors and calamities—let us not increase the catalogue—let us not by these deadly artifices provoke a system of insidious and indiscriminate hostility, that shall terminate in laying our cities desolate, and exposing our women, our children, and our infirm, to the sword of pitiless recrimination.” Honest old cavalier!—it was evident he did not reason as a true politician—but he felt as a christian and philanthropist, and that was, perhaps, just as well.

It may be readily supposed, that our citizens did not refuse the invitation of the society to the

blown up—it was the first *naval* action ever exhibited in our port; and the good people all crowded to see the british navy blown up in effigy. The young ladies were delighted with the novelty of the show, and declared that if war could be conducted in this manner, it would become a fashionable amusement, and the destruction of a fleet be as pleasant as a ball or a tea party. The old folk were equally pleased with the spectacle—because it cost them nothing. Dear souls, how hard was it they should be disappointed! the brig most obstinately refused to be *decomposed*—the dinners grew cold, and the puddings were overboiled, throughout the renowned city of Gotham, and its sapient inhabitants, like the honest strasburghers, (from whom most of them are doubtless descended) who went out to see the courteous stranger and his nose, all returned home, after having threatened to pull down the flag-staff, by way of taking satisfaction for their disappointment.—By the way, there is not an animal in the world more discriminating in its vengeance than a free born *mob*.

In the evening I repaired to friend Hogg's, to smoke a sociable cygarr, but had scarcely entered the room when I was taken prisoner by my friend, mr. Ichabod Fungus, who I soon saw was at his usual trade of prying into mill-stones. The old gentleman informed me that the brig had actually blown up, after a world of manœuvring, and had nearly blown up the society with it—he seemed to entertain strong doubts as to the objects of the society in the invention of these infernal machines—hinted a suspicion of their wishing to set the river on fire, and that he should not be surprized on waking one of these mornings, to find the Hudson in a blaze. “Not that I disapprove of the plan,”

said he, "provided it has the end in view which they profess—no, no, an excellent plan of defence—no need of batteries, forts, frigates and gun-boats:—observe, sir, all that's necessary is that the ships must come to anchor in a convenient place—watch must be asleep, or so complacent as not to disturb any boats paddling about them—fair wind and tide—no moonlight—machines well-directed—mustn't *flash in the pan*—bang's the word, and the vessel's blown up in a moment!" "Good," said I, "you remind me of a lubberly chinese who was flogged by an honest captain of my acquaintance, and who on being advised to retaliate, exclaimed—"Hi yah! spose two men hold fast him captain, den very mush me bamboo he!"

The old gentleman grew a little crusty, and insisted that I did not understand him—all that was requisite to render the effect certain, was that the enemy should enter into the project, or in other words, be *agreeable to the measure*, so that if the machine did not come to the ship, the ship should go to the machine, by which means he thought the success of the machine would be inevitable—provided it struck fire. "But do not you think," said I, doubtingly, "that it would be rather difficult to persuade the enemy into such an agreement? some people have an invincible antipathy to being blown up"—"not at all, not at all," replied he, triumphantly—"got an excellent notion for that—do with them as we have done with the brig; *buy* all the vessels we mean to destroy, and blow 'em up as best suits our convenience. I have thought deeply on that subject and have calculated to a certainty, that if our funds hold out, we may in this way destroy the whole british navy—by contract."

By this time all the quidnuncs of the room had gathered around us, each pregnant with some mighty scheme for the salvation of his country. One pathetically lamented that we had no such men among us as the famous *Toujoursdort* and *Grossitout*, who, when the celebrated captain *Tranchemont*, made war against the city of *Kalacahabalaba*, utterly discomfited the great king *Bigstaff*, and blew up his whole army by sneezing. Another imparted a sage idea which seems to have occupied more heads than one—that is, that the best way of fortifying the harbour was to ruin it at once; choak the channel with rocks and blocks; strew it with *chevaux-de-frises* and torpedoes; and make it like a nursery-garden, full of men-traps and spring-guns. No vessel would then have the temerity to enter our harbour—we should not even dare to navigate it ourselves. Or if no cheaper way could be devised, let Governor's-Island be raised by levers and pulleys—floated with empty casks, &c. towed down to the Narrows, and dropped plump in the very mouth of the harbour!—"But," said I, "would not the prosecution of these whim-whams be rather expensive and dilatory?"—"Pshaw!" cried the other—"what's a million of money to an experiment—the true spirit of our economy requires that we should *spare no expense* in discovering the *cheapest* mode of defending ourselves; and then if all these modes should fail, why you know the worst we have to do is to return to the old-fashioned hum-drum mode of forts and batteries." "By which time," cried I, "the arrival of the enemy may have rendered their erection superfluous."

A shrewd old gentleman, who stood listening by with a mischievously equivocal look, observed that the most effectual mode of repulsing a fleet from our ports would be to administer them a proclamation from time to time, *till it operated.*

Unwilling to leave the company without demonstrating my patriotism and ingenuity, I communicated a plan of defence, which in truth was suggested long since by that infallible oracle MUSTAPHA, who had as clear a head for cobweb weaving, as ever dignified the shoulders of a projector. He thought the most effectual mode would be to assemble all the *slang-whangers*, great and small, from all parts of the state, and marshal them at the battery, where they should be exposed, point blank, to the enemy, and form a tremendous body of scolding infantry, similar to the *foissards* or doughty champions of Billingsgate. They should be exhorted to fire away without pity or remorse, in sheets, half-sheets, columns, hand-bills or squibs—great canon, little canon, pica, german-text, stereotype—and to run their enemies through and through with sharp pointed italics. They should have orders to show no quarter—to blaze away in their loudest epithets—“*miscreants !*” “*murderers !*” “*barbarians !*” “*pirates !*” “*robbers !*” “BLACKGUARDS !” and to do away all fear of consequences they should be guaranteed from all dangers of pillory, kicking, cuffing, nose-pulling, whipping-post, or prosecution for libels. If, continued Mustapha, you wish men to fight well and valiantly, they must be allowed those weapons they have been used to handle. Your countrymen are notoriously adroit in the management of the tongue and the pen, and conduct all their battles by speeches or newspapers.

Adopt, therefore, the plan I have pointed out, and rely upon it, that let any fleet, however large, be but once assailed by this battery of slang-whangers, and if they have not entirely lost the sense of hearing, or a regard for their own characters and feelings, they will, at the very first fire, slip their cables and retreat with as much precipitation as if they had unwarily entered into the atmosphere of the *Bohan ufas*. In this manner may your wars be conducted with proper economy; and it will cost no more to drive off a fleet than to write *ufi* a party or write down a bashaw of three tails.

The sly old gentleman, I have before mentioned, was highly delighted with this plan, and proposed, as an improvement, that mortars should be placed on the battery, which, instead of throwing shells and such trifles, might be charged with newspapers, Tammany addresses, &c. by way of red-hot shot, which would undoubtedly be very potent in blowing up any powder magazine they might chance to come in contact with. He concluded by informing the company, that in the course of a few evenings he would have the honour to present them with a scheme for loading certain vessels with newspapers, resolutions of numerous and respectable meetings, and other combustibles, which vessels were to be blown directly in the midst of the enemy by the bellows of the slang-whangers, and he was much mistaken if they would not be more fatal than fire-ships, bomb-ketches, gun-boats, or even torpedoes.

These are but two or three specimens of the nature and efficacy of the innumerable plans with which this city abounds. Every body seems charged

to the muzzle with gun-powder—every eye flashes fire-works and torpedoes, and every corner is occupied by knots of inflammatory projectors, not one of whom but has some preposterous mode of destruction which he has proved to be infallible by a previous experiment in a *tub of water* !

Even Jeremy Cockloft has caught the infection, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants of Cockloft-hall, whither he retired to make his experiments undisturbed. At one time all the mirrors in the house were unhung—their collected rays thrown into the hot-house, to try Archimedes' plan of burning-glasses ; and the honest old gardener was almost knocked down by what he mistook for a stroke of the sun, but which turned out to be nothing more than a sudden attack of one of these tremendous *jack-o'-lanterns*. It became dangerous to walk through the court-yard for fear of an explosion : and the whole family was thrown into absolute distress and consternation, by a letter from the old house-keeper to mrs. Cockloft, informing her of his having blown up a favourite chinese gander, which I had brought from Canton, as he was majestically sailing in the duck-pond.

“ In the multitude of counsellors there is safety ” —if so, the defenceless city of Gotham has nothing to apprehend ;—but much do I fear that so many excellent and infallible projects will be presented, that we shall be at a loss which to adopt, and the peaceable inhabitants fare like a famous projector of my acquaintance, whose house was unfortunately plundered while he was contriving a patent lock to secure the door.

FROM MY ELBOW-CHAIR.

A RETROSPECT,
OR, "WHAT YOU WILL."

Lolling in my Elbow-Chair this fine summer noon, I feel myself insensibly yielding to that genial feeling of indolence the season is so well fitted to inspire. Every one, who is blessed with a little of the delicious languor of disposition that delights in repose, must often have sported among the faëry scenes, the golden visions, the voluptuous reveries, that swim before the imagination at such moments—and which so much resemble those blissful sensations a mussulman enjoys after his favourite indulgence of opium, which Will Wizard declares can be compared to nothing but "swimming in an ocean of peacocks' feathers." In such a mood, every body must be sensible it would be idle and unprofitable for a man to send his wits a gadding on a voyage of discovery into futurity; or even to trouble himself with a laborious investigation of what is actually passing under his eye. We are, at such times, more disposed to resort to the pleasures of memory, than to those of the imagination; and like the way-faring traveller, reclining for a moment on his staff, had rather contemplate the ground we have travelled, than the region which is yet before us.

I could here amuse myself and stultify my readers with a most elaborate and ingenious parallel between authors and travellers; but in this balmy season which makes men stupid and dogs mad, and when doubtless many of our most strenuous admirers have great difficulty in keeping awake through the day, it would be cruel to saddle them with the formidable difficulty of putting two ideas together and drawing a conclusion, or in the learned phrase, forging *sylogisms in Baroco*—a terrible undertaking for the Dog Days! To say the truth, my observations were only intended to prove that this, of all others, is the most auspicious moment, and my present, the most favourable mood for indulging in a retrospect. Whether, like certain great personages of the day, in attempting to prove one thing, I have exposed another; or whether like certain other great personages; in attempting to prove a great deal, I have proved nothing at all, I leave to my readers to decide, provided they have the power and inclination so to do; but a RETROSPECT will I take notwithstanding.

I am perfectly aware that in doing this I shall lay myself open to the charge of imitation, than which a man might better be accused of downright house-breaking, for it has been a standing rule with many of my illustrious predecessors, occasionally, and particularly at the conclusion of a volume, to look over their shoulder and chuckle at the miracles they had atchieved. But as I before professed, I am determined to hold myself intirely independent of all manner of opinions and criticisms, as the only method of getting on in this world in any thing like a straight line. True it is, I may some-

times seem to angle a little for the good opinion of mankind, by giving them some excellent reasons for doing unreasonable things ; but this is merely to show them, that although I may occasionally go wrong, it is not for want of knowing how to go right : and here I will lay down a maxim, which will for ever intitle me to the gratitude of my inexperienced readers—namely, that a man always gets more credit in the eyes of this naughty world for sinning wilfully, than for sinning through sheer ignorance.

It will doubtless be insisted by many ingenious cavillers, who will be meddling with what does not at all concern them, that this retrospect should have been taken at the commencement of our second volume—it is usual, I know—moreover it is natural. So soon as a writer has once accomplished a volume, he forthwith becomes wonderfully increased in altitude—he steps upon his book as upon a pedestal, and is elevated in proportion to its magnitude. A duodecimo makes him one inch taller ; an octavo, three inches ; a quarto, six ;—but he who, like mynheer, has written a book “ as tick as a cheese ” looks down upon his fellow creatures from such a fearful height, that, ten to one, the poor man’s head is turned for ever afterwards. From such a lofty situation, therefore, it is natural an author should cast his eyes behind, and having reached the first landing place on the stairs of immortality, may reasonably be allowed to plead his privilege to look back over the height he has ascended. I have deviated a little from this venerable custom, merely that our retrospect might fall in the Dog Days—of all days in the year most congenial to the indulgence of a little self-sufficiency,

inasmuch as people have then little to do but to retire within the sphere of self, and make the most of what they find there.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we think ourselves a whit the wiser or better since we have finished our volume than we were before ; on the contrary, we seriously assure our readers that we were fully possessed of all the wisdom and morality it contains at the moment we commenced writing. It is the world which has grown wiser—not us ; we have thrown our mite into the common stock of knowledge—we have shared our morsel with the ignorant multitude ; and so far from elevating ourselves above the world, our sole endeavour has been to raise the world to our own level—and make it as wise as we, its disinterested benefactors.

To a moral writer like myself, who, next to his own comfort and entertainment, has the good of his fellow-citizens at heart, a retrospect is but a sorry amusement. Like the industrious husbandman, he often contemplates in silent disappointment his labours wasted on a barren soil, or the seed he has carefully sown, choked by a redundancy of worthless weeds. I expected long ere this to have seen a complete reformation in manners and morals, achieved by our united efforts. My fancy echoed to the applauding voices of a retrieved generation ; I anticipated, with proud satisfaction, the period, not far distant, when our work would be introduced into the *Academies* with which every lane and alley of our cities abounds ; when our precepts would be gently inducted into every unlucky urchin by force of birch, and my iron-bound physiognomy, as taken by Will Wizard, be

as notorious as that of Noah Webster, junr. esq. or his no less renowned predecessor the illustrious Dilworth of spelling-book immortality. But, well-a-day! to let my readers into a profound secret—the expectations of man are like the varied hues that tinge the distant prospect—never to be realised, never to be enjoyed but in perspective. Luckless Launce-lot! that the humblest of the many air castles thou hast erected should prove a “baseless fabrick!” Much does it grieve me to confess, that after all our lectures, precepts, and excellent admonitions, the people of New-York are nearly as much given to backsliding and ill-nature as ever; they are just as much abandoned to dancing and tea-drinking: and as to scandal, Will Wizard informs me that by a rough computation, since the last cargo of gunpowder-tea from Canton, no less than eighteen characters have been blown up, besides a number of others that have been woefully shattered.

The ladies still labour under the same scarcity of muslins, and delight in flesh-coloured silk stockings; it is evident, however, that our advice has had very considerable effect on them, as they endeavour to act as opposite to it as possible—this being what Evergreen calls *female independence*. As to Straddles, they abound as much as ever in Broadway, particularly on Sundays; and Wizard roundly asserts that he supped in company with a knot of them a few evenings since, when they *liquidated* a whole Birmingham consignment, in a batch of imperial champaign. I have furthermore, in the course of a month past, detected no less than three Giblet families making their first onset towards style and gentility, in the very manner we have

heretofore reprobated. Nor have our utmost efforts been able to check the progress of that alarming epidemic, the rage for punning, which, though doubtless originally intended merely to ornament and enliven conversation by little sports of fancy, threatens to overrun and poison the whole, like the baneful ivy which destroys the useful plant it first embellished. Now I look upon an habitual punster as a depredator upon conversation; and I have remarked sometimes one of these offenders, sitting silent on the watch for an hour together, until some luckless wight, unfortunately for the ease and quiet of the company, dropped a phrase susceptible of a double meaning,—when——pop,—our punster would dart out like a veteran mouser from her covert, seize the unlucky word, and after worrying and mumbling at it until it was capable of no further marring, relapse again into silent watchfulness, and lie in wait for another opportunity. Even this might be borne with, by the aid of a little philosophy: but, the worst of it is, they are not content to manufacture puns and laugh heartily at them themselves; but they expect we should laugh with them—which I consider as an intolerable hardship, and a flagrant imposition on good nature. Let these gentlemen fritter away conversation with impunity, and deal out their wits in sixpenny bits if they please, but I beg I may have the choice of refusing currency to their small change. I am seriously afraid, however, that our junto is not quite free from the infection, nay, that it has even approached so near as to menace the tranquility of my elbow-chair: for, Will Wizard, as we were in caucus the other night, abso-

lutely electrified Pindar and myself with a most palpable and perplexing pun—had it been a torpedo, it could not have more discomposed the fraternity. Sentence of banishment was unanimously decreed, but on his confessing that like many celebrated wits, he was merely retailing other men's wares on commission, he was for that once forgiven, on condition of refraining from such diabolical practices in future. Pindar is particularly outrageous against punsters; and quite astonished and put me to a nonplus a day or two since, by asking abruptly "whether I thought a punster could be a good christian?" He followed up his question triumphantly by offering to prove, by sound logic and historical fact, that the roman empire owed its decline and fall to a pun; and that nothing tended so much to demoralize the french nation, as their abominable rage for *jeux de mots*.

But what, above every thing else, has caused me much vexation of spirit, and displeased me most with this stiff-necked nation, is that in spite of all the serious and profound censures of the sage Mustapha, in his various letters—they *will talk!*—they will still wag their tongues, and chatter like very slang-whangers! This is a degree of obstinacy incomprehensible in the extreme; and is another proof, how alarming is the force of habit, and how difficult it is to reduce beings, accustomed to talk, to that state of silence which is the very acme of human wisdom.

We can only account for these disappointments, in our moderate and reasonable expectations, by supposing the world so deeply sunk in the mire of delinquency, that not even Hercules, were

he to put his shoulder to the axletree, would be able to extricate it. We comfort ourselves, however, by the reflection, that there are, at least, three good men left in this degenerate age, to benefit the world by example, should precept ultimately fail. And borrowing, for once, an example from certain sleepy writers, who, after the first emotions of surprise at finding their invaluable effusions neglected or despised, console themselves with the idea that 'tis a stupid age, and look forward to posterity for redress—we bequeath our first volume to future generations—and much good may it do them. Heaven grant they may be able to read it! for, if our fashionable mode of education continues to improve, as of late, I am under serious apprehensions that the period is not far distant, when the discipline of the dancing master will supersede that of the grammarian; crotchets and quavers supplant the alphabet, and the heels, by an antipodean manœuvre, obtain entire pre-eminence over the head. How does my heart yearn for poor dear posterity, when this work shall become as unintelligible to our grandchildren, as it seems to be to their grandfathers and grandmothers.

In fact (for I love to be candid) we begin to suspect that many people read our numbers, merely for their amusement, without paying any attention to the serious truths conveyed in every page. Unpardonable want of penetration! not that we wish to restrict our readers in the article of lughing, which we consider as one of the dearest prerogatives of man, and the distinguishing characteristic which raises him above all other animals: let them laugh therefore if they will, provided they profit at the

same time, and do not mistake our object. It is one of our indisputable facts, that it is easier to laugh ten follies out of countenance than to coax, reason, or flog a man out of one. In this odd singular and indescribable age, which is neither the age of gold, silver, iron, brass, chivalry, or *fills* (as sir John Carr asserts) a grave writer who attempts to attack folly with the heavy artillery of moral reasoning, will fare like Smollet's honest pedant, who clearly demonstrated by angles &c., after the manner of Euclid, that it was wrong to do evil—and was laughed at for his pains. Take my word for it, a little well applied ridicule, like Hannibal's application of vinegar to rocks, will do more with certain hard heads and obdurate hearts, than all the logic or demonstrations in Longinus or Euclid. But the people of Gotham, wise souls ! are so much accustomed to see morality approach them clothed in formidable wigs and sable garbs, "with leaden eye that loves the ground," that they can never recognize her when, drest in gay attire, she comes tripping towards them with smiles and sunshine in her countenance.—Well, let the rogues remain in happy ignorance, for "ignorance is bliss," as the poet says ;—and I put as implicit faith in poetry as I do in the almanack or the newspaper—we *will* improve them, without their being the wiser for it, and they shall become better in spite of their teeth, and without their having the least suspicion of the reformation working within them.

Among all our manifold grievances, however, still some small, but vivid rays of sunshine occasionally brighten along our path, cheering our steps, and inviting us to persevere.

The publick have paid some little regard to a few articles of our advice—they have purchased our numbers freely—so much the better for our publisher—they have read them attentively—so much the better for themselves. The melancholy fate of my dear aunt Charity has had a wonderful effect, and I have now before me a letter from a gentleman who lives opposite to a couple of old ladies, remarkable for the interest they took in his affairs—his apartments were absolutely in a state of blockade, and he was on the point of changing his lodgings or capitulating, until the appearance of our ninth number, which he immediately sent over with his compliments—the good old ladies took the hint, and have scarcely appeared at their window since. As to the *wooden gentlemen*, our friend miss Sparkle assures me, they are wonderfully improved by our criticisms, and sometimes venture to make a remark or attempt a pun in company, to the great edification of all who happen to understand them. As to red shawls, they are intirely discarded from the fair shoulders of our ladies—ever since the last importation of finery—nor has any lady, since the cold weather, ventured to expose her elbows to the admiring gaze of scrutinizing passengers. But there is one victory we have atchieved which has given us more pleasure than to have written down the whole administration. I am assured from unquestionable authority, that our young ladies, doubtless in consequence of our weighty admonitions, have not once indulged in that intoxicating, inflammatory, and whirligig dance, the *waltz*—ever since hot weather commenced. True it is, I understand an attempt was made to exhibit it by some of

the sable fair ones at the last *african ball*, but it was highly disapproved of by all the respectable elderly ladies present.

These are sweet sources of comfort to atone for the many wrongs and misrepresentations heaped upon us by the world—for even we have experienced its ill nature. How often have we heard ourselves reproached for the insidious applications of the uncharitable!—how often have we been accused of emotions which never found an entrance into our bosoms!—how often have our sportive effusions been wrested to serve the purposes of particular enmity and bitterness!—Meddlesome spirits! little do they know our dispositions; we “lack gall” to wound the feelings of a single innocent individual; we can even forgive *them* from the very bottom of our souls—may they meet as ready a forgiveness from their own consciences! Like true and independent bachelors, having no domestic cares to interfere with our general benevolence, we consider it incumbent upon us to watch over the welfare of society; and although we are indebted to the world for little else than left-handed favours, yet we feel a proud satisfaction in requiting evil with good, and the sneer of illiberality with the unfeigned smile of good-humour. With these mingled motives of selfishness and philanthropy we commenced our work, and if we cannot solace ourselves with the consciousness of having done much good, yet there is still one pleasing consolation left, which the world can neither give nor take away. There are moments—lingering moments of listless indifference and heavy-hearted despondency—when our best hopes and affections slipping, as they sometimes will, from their hold

on these objects to which they usually cling for support, seem abandoned on the wide waste of cheerless existence, without a place to cast anchor—without a shore in view to excite a single wish, or to give a momentary interest to contemplation. We look back with delight upon many of these moments of mental gloom, whiled away by the cheerful exercise of our pen, and consider every such triumph over the spleen, as retarding the furrowing hand of time, in its insidious encroachments on our brows. If, in addition to our own amusements, we have, as we jogged carelessly laughing along, brushed away one tear of dejection, and called forth a smile in its place; if we have brightened the pale countenance of a single child of sorrow; we shall feel almost as much joy and rejoicing as a slang-whanger does when he bathes his pen in the heart's-blood of a patron and factor; or sacrifices one more illustrious victim on the altar of *party animosity*.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

It is our misfortune to be frequently pestered, in our peregrinations about this learned city, by certain critical gad-flies, who buzz around and merely attack the skin, without ever being able to penetrate the body. The reputation of our promising *protégé*, Jeremy Cockloft the younger, has been assailed by these skin-deep critics; they have questioned his claims to originality, and even hinted that the ideas for his New-Jersey Tour were borrowed from a late work entitled "*MY POCKET-*

BOOK." As there is no literary offence more despicable in the eyes of the trio than *borrowing*, we immediately called Jeremy to an account; when he proved, by the dedication of the work in question, that it was first published in *London* in March 1807—and that his "*Stranger in New-Jersey*" had made its appearance on the 24th of the preceding February.

We were on the point of acquitting Jeremy with honour, on the ground that it was impossible, *knowing* as he is, to borrow from a foreign work *one month before* it was in existence, when Will Wizard suddenly took up the cudgels for the critics, and insisted that nothing was more probable, for he recollected reading of an ingenious dutch author, who plainly convicted the *antients* of stealing from his labours!—So much for *criticism*.

We have received a host of friendly and admonitory letters from different quarters, and among the rest a very loving epistle from George-town, Columbia, signed *Teddy M-Gundy*, who addresses us by the name of *Saul M-Gundy*, and insists that we are descended from the same irish progenitors, and nearly related. As friend Teddy seems to be an honest merry rogue, we are sorry that we cannot admit his claims to kindred; we thank him, however, for his good will, and should he ever be inclined to *favour* us with another epistle, we will hint to him, and at the same time to our other numerous correspondents, that their communications will be infinitely more acceptable if they will just recollect Tom Shuffleton's advice, "*pay the post-boy, Muggins.*"
